

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION  
JANUARY 14, 2008

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M. Cook, Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer, and Roy J. Roberts, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: None

Chairman Mark Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum present, and welcomed everyone. Pastor Tommy R. Davis, New Miranda Baptist Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Forrester led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2007 meeting and also the minutes of the January 2, 2008 meeting. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

#### Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver asked for continued thoughts and prayers for former Commissioner Wylie Yelverton's family. He pointed out Mr. Yelverton passed away on January 8<sup>th</sup>, and quite a crowd attended his memorial service on Friday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. Chairman Culver reported he served his fellow man for a long time and particularly on the county commission.

The chairman reported Jail Commander Reed has been providing the commission with a monthly jail report. He stated it lets the commission know where they are from an inmate perspective, and it also lets the public know how the judicial system and law enforcement system are either filling or exiting from the jail. He pointed out as of January 8<sup>th</sup>, there were 427 inmates which was up from the previous month from 415 but significantly down from where it was when they started the monthly report. Chairman Culver reported they continually try to get people out or moved to Montgomery. He stated the commission would like to see the number get down below 400 and they will continue to work on it.

#### Awards and Presentations

1. Envision – First Quarterly Report – Dr. Thomas Harrison, Envision Coordinator.

The chairman reported Dr. Harrison could not attend the meeting, and Mr. Danny Sharp, Chairman of the Envision Committee, and Mr. Tracy Knowles, would be making the presentation.

Mr. Sharp thanked the commission for their contributions and involvement in the process. He reported there are 4 areas of mission and everyone is familiar with those areas. Mr. Sharp then mentioned one item under each of the areas.

Education – Work keys initiatives continues to be an important aspect of Envision, and is led by Wallace Community College. Mr. Sharp reported the aim of the project is to make sure when the students leave their final education place, whether it is the two year or four year system, that they are ready for their career. He pointed out this initiative works throughout the education process as well as with local industries.

Grow the Economy – Mr. Sharp reported there are a lot of efforts being made throughout SE Alabama and the Tri-State area; not just Dothan/Houston County. He stated the group wants to involve themselves in information sharing of all the initiatives. Mr. Sharp pointed out there are a lot of areas of duplication and they want to get with everyone and communicate. He reported they want to have 2 or 3 sessions the first half of this year regarding the Port of Panama City and the International Airport. He stated they would like to concentrate on the aviation industry and the role that the college in Ozark plays. Mr. Sharp reported throughout the year they are going to attempt to come up with a process for structuring a process for long range planning for the economic development initiatives.

Regionalism – Mr. Sharp reported they have a public task force and they are working on some issues that are challenges to all of us. He stated all cities and counties in this area have some challenging issues and they are going to work on communication, grant writing, technology, and training for various departments in our government.

Quality of Life – Mr. Sharp reported that group continues to address the needs of senior citizens first and foremost and then neighborhood restoration.

Mr. Sharp reported an exciting thing that is happening in the community is the Dothan Area Young Professionals. He pointed out they have an age bracket that they focus on.

He then introduced Mr. Tracy Knowles, The Parsons Group, who briefed the commission. He reported several months ago, Dr. Thomas Harrison asked him to be on an advisory board for a young professionals group in this area. He stated after he accepted, he was informed he was the Chairperson for the group. Mr. Parsons reported the advisory board met throughout the summer and realized there was a need to pull the young professionals together. He stated the advisory group sat down and went around with several different type organizations around the country and did research on those associations and realized that in Destin, Florida there was a person who headed their chamber who had been responsible for developing a lot of these programs. He reported in

October, they brought that person in and the advisory board spent a full day in a planning process. He reported in November, they had a Kickoff meeting to release what the group will be. Mr. Knowles reported the name of the group is the Dothan Area Young Professionals. He pointed out the Dothan area is key because it is a regional group. Mr. Knowles then read the mission statement as follows: He stated the mission statement is based on young professionals in the Dothan area's impact in the community providing professional development, building relationships, and creating future leaders. Mr. Knowles reported the target group they have are individuals from age 21-41 that are professionals. He stated there is a loose definition of professional; it is how you carry yourself. Mr. Knowles reported no matter what you do in your job, if a person is willing to join the group and get involved they would by definition be a professional. He pointed out they have 3 base committees:

1. Professional Development Committee whose goal is to bring speakers into talk with their group about ways they can improve themselves personally in their profession.
2. Community Outreach Group who will be responsible for doing projects on a quarterly basis to get out in the community and give back.
3. Social and Networking Committee which is basically designed to have events and bring all of the professionals in Dothan together. He pointed out it is amazing how many professionals are in town that are not from Dothan. Mr. Knowles reported their e-mail distribution list is approximately 300 people. He reported they are excited about getting the group together, and they hope it will become more involved in the political and social process and getting more involved in this community to help bring new business to town, retaining the professionals they have and give them an opportunity to participate once they locate here.

Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Sharp and Mr. Knowles. The chairman stated he was as excited about the Young Professionals Group as anything that has come out of Envision. He stated those in the group who are not from our area who have moved here for whatever reason will be informed and empowered. The chairman stated this group will take the community and move it forward and he stated he looked for big things from it.

Commissioner Forrester stated it was his understanding that the regional airport in Panama City had a setback recently regarding the wetlands. He asked Mr. Sharp to elaborate? Mr. Sharp stated he had heard the same thing but he really could not elaborate. He reported they are waiting to hear the extent of that. Chairman Culver stated he did not think it would be terminal and either way, he felt it would be good that there will be a session on that and how it will impact our area.

2. Alabama State Bar “Wills for Heroes” Project – Mr. Hamp Baxley.

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Baxley had to be in court, and Mr. Dustin Byrd who works with Mr. Baxley will represent him.

Mr. Byrd of Ramsey, Baxley, and McDougald, reported they are excited about the project. He stated “Wills for Heroes” was implemented by Sam Crosby, Head of the Alabama State Bar Association, and it is being implemented throughout all areas of the state. Mr. Byrd reported the project is an opportunity for the legal community to show their appreciation to firefighters, police officers, and emergency personnel in providing them with free wills, power of attorneys, and free living wills. He stated this will be implemented through a 2-3 day clinic at the Dothan Civic Center sometime during the latter part of February. He reported they are still working on the definite dates. Mr. Byrd stated the first responders are all welcome to attend and they will be provided with free wills, power of attorneys, and free living wills through a simple process. The chairman stated he felt it is a really good program and that is a segment of society that puts their neck on the line everyday that we sometimes take for granted. Chairman Culver asked if volunteer organizations would be included? The chairman asked Mr. Byrd to get with Mr. Clark Matthews, EMA Director, for contact availability for volunteers. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Matthews to let the volunteers know when the clinic would be? Mr. Culver thanked Mr. Byrd for his presentation.

Consent Agenda

1. Request to award bids on eleven (11) mobile lighting units.
2. Request from Information Technology to award bids on computers.
3. Request to award bids for 52’ Lowboy trailer and herbicides.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the consent agenda to award bids on eleven mobile lighting units to the only bidder, United Rentals, in the amount of \$6,956.78 each; 12 desktop computers as specified General PC configuration to Howard Technology, low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$1,198.00 each, 1 desktop computer for commission to Howard Technology, in the amount of \$1,296.00, 1 desktop computer for the Farm Center to Howard Technology, low bidder meeting specs, in the amount of \$814.00, 1 laptop computer for Road and Bridge to Howard Technology, in the amount of \$2,934.35, 2 desktop computers for Road and Bridge to Howard Technology in the amount of \$1,222.00 each, and 1 desktop computer as specified mapping configuration to Howard Technology in the amount of \$1,590.00; 1 52 foot lowboy trailer to Warrior Tractor & Equipment Co., Inc. (Montgomery, AL), low bidder meetings specs, in the amount of \$43,470.00; and the herbicide bid to the lowest bidder meeting specs in the various categories. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

## Regular Agenda

1. Request to approve Update on Long Range Plan.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the update on the Long Range Plan. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver covered the plan in detail and the administrative meeting, and stated he was only going to mention the changes in the plan. He requested Paul Clark, Manager, Information Technology, to get the revised version posted on the website. The chairman then highlighted the changes as follows:

### CAPITAL PLAN

1. Long Term Building Plans related to the Farm Center – the county will continue to use the Farm Center. He stated there is no intent he hoped of ever tearing it down as it is a public landmark. The chairman reported the Farm Center Manager has some other use for some of the bleachers and possibly for some of the concrete risers to be taken out and create a good storage facility temporarily as opposed to the county buying a storage facility.
2. Joint Communications and EMA Center – this is moving forward and on January 15<sup>th</sup>, the county's two 911 board members will have a meeting where the downtown site will be approved for the Joint Communications Center. He stated that update is in the new plan.

### Countywide Water System and Long Term Water Supply

The projects that have been approved since last year will be beginning shortly in conjunction with the Town of Taylor, City of Dothan, Houston County Water Authority and hopefully, at some point, the City of Ashford.

### Bridge Replacement and Widening on Brannon Stand Road

He reported in the previous plan they talked about trying to get funding. He reported funding as follows:

\$250,000 from the Federal Government in an appropriation bill with Congressman Terry Everett's help.

\$250,000 has been appropriated by the State of Alabama with the help of Senator Harri Anne Smith and others

\$250,000 as a commitment from the City of Dothan with the help of Mayor Pat Thomas

He pointed out that is \$750,000 to go toward the project. The chairman stated it will be bid in February and the project will begin in June.

## Downtown Dothan Redevelopment

He stated even though the commission has not voted on it they have a conceptual commitment to support the library project once it becomes a project.

## OPERATIONAL PLAN

Removed the potential to go into a Merit System. He stated the commission felt after evaluation, it needed to be taken out.

Removed looking at the Sanitation fee because it became a reality, and is done.

## Building Permitting and Inspection

In the county's discussion with the city on subdivision jurisdiction it was pretty clear that the county needed to move forward with that. He reported that Mr. Pool is working on that plan along with bringing flood plain permitting into the engineering office. The chairman reported Mr. Pool will have a presentation in the near future about implementing that program.

## Call for Referendum on Limited Home Rule

He reported there are steps that need to be taken and the plan from the commission is to put it on the ballot in November for the citizens in the unincorporated parts of the county to vote on. He reported it will give the county commission the ability to abate nuisances as clearly defined in the law but would not give them any zoning, planning or taxing authority; strictly nuisance abatement. He stated the nuisances are specifically spelled out in the law. He stated these are the basic changes from last year's plan. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Minute Book)

2. Request to renew Lease Agreement with Wiregrass Church for an additional three years.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to renew the Lease Agreement with Wiregrass Church for an additional three years. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to renew farming lease on land at Houston County Distribution Park.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to renew the farming lease on land at the Houston County Distribution Park. Commissioner

Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is the third year the commission has leased the land to a farmer. He pointed out it generates very little revenue. He reported they are working on an opportunity that might impact the number of acres and it is stipulated in the agreement if we advise him of that. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Request to extend contract for animal services with the City of Dothan.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the request to extend the contract for animal services with the City of Dothan. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. There being no discussion, the chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to approve budget amendment to amend contract with Pharmacist at the Jail to increase salary by \$5.00 per hour retroactive to October 15, 2007.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the budget amendment to amend the contract with the pharmacy at the Houston County Jail to increase the salary by \$5.00 per hour retroactive to October 15, 2007. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Commissioner Harvey asked the chairman for a dollar amount as to what the county will pay out on the retroactive portion? The chairman reported the contract states a minimum of 4 hours per week and if that were the case it would be less than \$400.00. He stated that position along with the rest of the medical staff is extremely important at the jail and this contract has been the same for 4 years and felt it is due an increase. Commissioner Cook reported this has also saved the county a great deal of money, and it has been 3 or 4 years since she started the program. The chairman asked Mr. Roberts if he recalled how much was saved when the county went from outside prescribing to in-house prescribing of drugs? Mr. Roberts stated he thought it was approximately \$70,000. He stated the pharmacist is averaging working about 26 hours a month and the back pay would be \$375.00. He stated the annual cost would be around \$1,500 and that would be the amount of the budget amendment. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached Budget amendment in Minute Book)

6. Request from Houston County Water Authority for assistance on project.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request from the Houston County Water Authority for assistance on project below Rehobeth. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is another step in implementing countywide water. He stated this project allows the county water system to have a secondary connection crossing Big Creek. The chairman reported at the present time, there is one line crossing Big Creek and if something should happen to that line, everyone south of Big Creek,

including the Houston County Distribution Park, would not have water availability from the Water Authority. He stated this gives them an opportunity to have a secondary source to re-route the water. The chairman reported the estimated cost for the project is \$340,000. He stated he met with PolyEngineering last week and they are going to meet with the Water Authority to try to get the price down some. Chairman Culver reported whatever the price ends up being the commission will have the opportunity in the next couple of meetings to decide whether or not to include that funding in the bond issue or whether they want to pay for it out of existing revenue. The chairman reported it is a very good project. He reported most of the water projects are being done on a 50/50 basis and the water authority has gone out and spent approximately \$300,000 on other projects on their system that covers their commitment on the project. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Request to approve budget amendment for the City of Ashford.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the budget amendment for the City of Ashford. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is a carry over from funds that were budgeted last year and were not completely expended. He pointed out it will be put back in as a line item. Chairman Culver reported this is work for the senior center. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached budget amendment in Minute Book)

8. Request to award bids for December 2007 Bid Opening for the Alabama County Joint Bid Program.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to award bids for the December 2007 Bid Opening for the Alabama County Joint Bid Program. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the commission is the awarding authority for all of the counties in the State of Alabama for the county bid program. He pointed out some of the items did not get in the original approval in November and this is to get those items on the bid list. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see attached in Minute Book)

9. Request from EMA to take bids on a Quick Deployment Tent (Homeland Security Grant)

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request from EMA to take bids on a Quick Deployment Tent to be funded through a Homeland Security Grant. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Commissioner Cook stated she understood this would be no cost to the county. Chairman Culver stated that was correct. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

## 10. 2008 Holiday Schedule

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to accept the 2008 Holiday Schedule and add December 26<sup>th</sup> as a holiday. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported the Personnel Board authorizes the holidays per the policy the commission adopted in conjunction with them that the county take all of the state holidays. He stated annually the commission takes the opportunity to determine any other days to be off. Chairman Culver pointed out Christmas Eve is usually the day the county is off but this time Christmas Eve falls on Wednesday it will not create a good work flow, and the recommendation is that the day after Christmas will be given. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Request for Restaurant Retail Liquor License – Susan Renee Mercer and Amanda Elaine Inge d/b/a 109 Bar & Grill, 4542 South State Highway 109 (109 S. Graceville Cut-off) Dothan, AL

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request for the Restaurant Retail Liquor License for Susan Renee Mercer and Amanda Elaine Inge d/b/a 1090 Bar & Grill, 4542 South State Highway 109 (109 S. Graceville Cut-off) Dothan, AL. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. The chairman stated information was in the packet showing no reason not to issue the license. He asked if anyone present was in opposition? There being no opposition, Chairman Culver called for the question; and it carried unanimously.

12. Request for Retail Beer License – (Off Premises Only) – Rebel Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Kelley's Superette, 2522 South State Highway 109 (109 S. Graceville Cut-off) Dothan, AL.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request for a Retail Beer License (Off Premises Only) for Rebel Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Kelley's Superette, 2522 South State Highway 109 (109 S. Graceville Cut-off) Dothan, AL. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver stated everyone's packet contained information showing no reason not to issue the license. He asked if anyone present was in opposition? There being no opposition, the Chairman called for the question; and it carried unanimously.

13. Request to approve agreement with ALDOT for Brannon Stand Bridge, Total estimate \$1,356,110; County funds: \$1,106,110; State Public Road and Bridge Funds (ST): \$250,000.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the agreement with ALDOT for the Brannon Stand Road Bridge. Commissioner Forrester seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported of the estimated amount of \$1,106,110 for county funds for the project, the county has \$500,000 to go against that amount in addition to the \$250,000 the state sent. He pointed out that lowers those costs

significantly. The chairman called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Pool if once the project is bid if it would be brought before the commission with the actual price? Mr. Pool State yes. (Please see in Resolution Book)

14. Request to reject bids for detour bridge for Brannon Stand Road project.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to reject bids for the detour bridge for the Brannon Stand Road project. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported per the Public Works Law if there is only one bid, then it can be rejected and it gives the engineer the opportunity to negotiate the price. He stated hopefully it will result in a lower price and also allow the engineer to be able to talk with some more vendors. Mr. Pool stated he hoped to have this item on the next meeting's agenda. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Request to approve agreement with ALDOT for Murphy Mill Road & Brannon Stand Road intersection improvements. Total estimate; \$676,150; County funds: \$135,230; MPO: \$540,920.

Commissioner Forrester made a motion to approve the agreement with ALDOT for Murphy Mill Road and Brannon Stand Road intersection improvements. Commissioner Cook seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported he did notice the media had notified the public about the project and he stated he appreciated that Providence School was notified about the work the county would be doing. Mr. Pool reported this phase of the work would not last but a few days. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously. (Please see in Resolution Book)

16. Request to approve the request from the Ashford Industrial Development Board.

Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the request from the Ashford Industrial Development Board. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this request involved moving some dirt. He called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

1. Chief Administrative Officer

Mr. Roberts reported they had made a trip on the bonds trying to secure a lower interest rate and a higher rating for the bonds. He stated if their efforts are successful there will be a reduction in the cost of the bond issue.

Mr. Roberts reported at the next Commission meeting he will be presenting the Annual Financial report, and it will be his last commission meeting and last financial report. He stated he will be turning it over to Bill Dempsey, who he felt would do a great job.

## 2. County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported the Brannon Stand detour is going well and all they need is a bridge and some asphalt.

He stated almost all of the clearing had been done at Wiregrass Rehab, and they would begin moving all of the topsoil, and hauling dirt in. He reported the city is helping on the limbs and they are going to allow the county to use their dirt pit because it is very close.

He reported all of the deeds have been drawn up on the Ardilla intersection, and they are contacting people. He stated they planned to break it into 4 different projects. Chairman Culver stated this is a much needed project.

Mr. Pool reported the heating unit in the Sanitation Department had passed away. He reported he did not know how old the heating unit was but it is over 23 years. Mr. Sean Curtis, Maintenance Manager, stated they lost the heat exchanger and it is his recommendation that the whole unit be replaced. He reported the lowest price for an outside contractor was \$4,200.00, and if the work was done in-house, they would spend \$2,662.75. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Curtis if he had gotten quotes, and done everything he needed to do on this project? Mr. Pool stated there would need to be a budget amendment. He reported Mr. Curtis took quotes and if he has an outside contractor to do the project, it is Public Works, but if he does the work in-house it will not be Public Works. He stated it is under \$7500. Chairman Culver asked Mr. Curtis if he had staff available to do the installation? Mr. Curtis stated yes.

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Pool and Mr. Curtis are asking the commission to address the issue, and he asked if any of the commissioners objected? There was no objection. Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to replace the heating unit at the Sanitation Department to be done in-house and to authorize a budget amendment in the amount of \$2,662.75. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. (Please see Budget Amendment in Minute Book)

Adjourn.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.